

reasoning, it makes up for in the affirmation that “experiential scholarship”—time and travel on the land—is an essential driver of effective environmental action. The challenge, as Madsen acknowledges, is to find balance and ways to cooperate for the good of humanity and the good of Nature—before all wild rivers and all wild lands are gone forever.

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SHINGWAUK'S VISION: A HISTORY OF NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS. By JAMES R. MILLER. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. 582 p., b&w illus., maps, bib., index. Hardbound, Cdn\$70.00; Softbound, Cdn\$29.95.

Among the numerous justice-seeking recommendations emerging from its exhaustive report on the history of relations between the First Nations and the rest of Canada, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) placed Native residential schools near the top of a lengthy list of society's culprits. The *Globe and Mail* noted that “the Queen and Parliament should issue a royal proclamation acknowledging mistakes of the past and committing governments to a new relationship...[by conducting] a wide-ranging public inquiry... into the origins and effects of residential schools” (22 November 1996, p. A8).

Why, of all the arenas of five centuries of engagement between Native and non-Native Canadians, should residential schools be attributed such consequence, even notoriety? Where might those seeking to understand the significance of the Commission's reproach start their personal investigation of this pivotal subject? The answer to both questions can best be found by reading J.R. Miller's recent and extensive study, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*.

In the opinion of this reviewer, there has not been—nor is there likely to be—as complete an inquiry and as trustworthy a standard for evaluating the Native residential school phenomenon as this exhaustive and engaging treatise. Miller researched the voluminous primary residential school documentation in both church and government archives. In addition, he interviewed dozens of living Native attendees of the schools throughout the land. He participated in celebrations, conferences, and healing sessions, as well as other formal and informal events. The author largely succeeds in presenting a balanced, three-part assessment of why the schools were set up, how they functioned, and their current consequences.

Miller describes the purpose of his book as “an attempt to provide an overview of the history of residential schools as *one facet* (italics mine) of the more general history of relations between indigenous and immigrant peoples in the territory that became Canada” (p. ix). Yet, by probing the

story of the schools, readers gain a keener understanding of the dubious dynamics that have characterized half a millennium of cross-cultural engagement.

This study juxtaposes the philosophy and motivation of educational administrators and teachers (both secular and religious) and the views and experience of the students for whom the schools were purportedly intended. It should not be surprising that frequently intentions were at variance with results and what was provided was resisted, rejected, or, at very least, unappreciated.

The author accents and distinguishes an important motif from the outset: Native peoples consented to involvement in the residential schools essentially to obtain an education. Many (though by no means all) Natives, realized they had to adapt in order to function successfully in a world that was changed by the inevitable encroachment of Euro-Canadian society. They saw education as the primary means of preparing themselves for this adaptation. However, their intentions were not generally understood or appreciated; the broader Canadian society considered assimilation of Natives into the larger culture, not their vocational training or schooling, to be the primary reason for government involvement in the schools. For the churches, on the other hand, the religious conversion of the “pagan Indian” to an awareness of a “higher” civilization and eternal life, not primarily learning for this life, was the main reason to participate.

Traditional Native pedagogy focused on the “Three L's”—looking, listening, and learning—while the vast majority of the non-Native schoolteachers relied on the standard “Three R's.” Euro-Canadian educational philosophers were almost universal in their disrespect for time-honoured Native learning environments and ways of teaching: non-Natives simply assumed their own methods and systems to be the best. The resulting psychological trauma experienced by the students, their families, and their descendants led many Natives to their deaths, or to chronic personal and social dysfunction—an inability to live effectively in either society.

The author claims repeatedly that the motives of the First Nations peoples were more authentic than those of government and church. With some obvious and notable exceptions, many of his examples broadly reinforce this perception. That is one of the more significant contributions of the book.

One positive and ironic side effect was that the residential schools were responsible for the early training of many Natives who subsequently became political and cultural leaders. This fact supports the author's strange but nonetheless legitimate conclusion that, in spite of the generally wrong-headed and failed nature of the residential school system, a certain number of “success stories” emerged, with a variety of educational benefits accruing to Native people who were able to make the cross-cultural transition. These were exceptions, however, not the rule.

Who was responsible for the damage done, and who should compensate? The author concludes that the Native people were essentially victims and not to blame for what happened. While a number of the major denominations involved in the schools have attempted apologies and healing

reparation, there is still much the churches need to do to make amends. But it is the government and the people of Canada upon whom the author lays the major blame and the burden of responsibility. One of Miller's most poignant statements for readers representing the larger Canadian constituency is that "the sin of interference has been replaced by the sin of indifference" (p. 435).

Most of the far northern residential schools that existed in what today are Canada's two territories are referred to, though some readers may be disappointed that certain of these schools are given short shrift or are missed altogether. All told, the northern schools had a better record than those in the south.

The author's concluding image is the one with which he began: Shingwauk's vision, the idea of a "teaching wigwam," first advocated by that Oji-Cree chief almost 175 years ago. Shingwauk, who lived in what is present-day Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, was committed to Native self-conscious education set within the context of the larger Canadian ethos. He wanted to establish a university "for the preservation and enhancement of native culture" (p. 4). Native initiative will be required to bring that historic vision to a reality, and it is only now within the realm of true possibility.

Natives and non-Natives will need to work together across Canada to create local, authentic aboriginal learning centres that can heal the ravages of a flawed school system and the cultural bias that created it. Canadians need to support the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to assure that this sad history will never repeat itself.

REFERENCE

CANADA. ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES. 1996. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. 5 Vols. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services.

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INUIT, WHALERS AND CULTURAL PERSISTENCE: STRUCTURE IN CUMBERLAND SOUND AND CENTRAL INUIT SOCIAL ORGANIZATION. By MARC G. STEVENSON. Oxford and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997. 340 p., maps, bib., glossary, notes, index. Softbound. Cdn\$26.95.

This book may be the most ambitious and broad-ranging analysis of Canadian Inuit culture and society undertaken by a single author since before the Second World War. In no small way, it is an attempt to construct a "Grand Unifying Theory" of Central Eskimo social structure and organization that draws from, and also reflects upon, Inuit ethnology,

prehistory, linguistics, and mythology in ways that are thought-provoking and frequently breathtaking. I certainly cannot remember another work that has prompted me to reread Lewis Henry Morgan on kinship and to pour over Thule harpoon types!

Although the author organizes *Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence* into four sections, one can parsimoniously break it down into three. By my reckoning, the first section gives an overview of Inuit social organization, examines Cumberland Sound Inuit society, essentially from the Thule period to the government era, and then critically analyses the social structure and organization of the various groups in the region. Altogether, this is a formidable task, as the denseness of the chapter on Cumberland Sound kin and local groups demonstrates. An important aspect of this section is that Stevenson sees Cumberland Sound (or at least its head) as having been occupied into this century by no less than two distinct Inuit societies, distinguishable on the basis of their adherence to one of Damas's (1963) behavioural directives: either *nalartuk* (respect-obedience) or *ungayuk* (affection-solidarity). Since researchers have generally seen these directives as primarily governing Inuit interpersonal relations within and between generations (see Damas, 1963:48–51; Nooter, 1976), Stevenson's application of these directives to analyse intersocietal differences has interesting theoretical implications. This section also presents important original data related to the demography and structure of Cumberland Sound groupings.

The second section (again by my schema) launches into a revisionist examination of the sociocultural and, ultimately, the prehistory and socio-territorial aspects of the Iglulik, the Netsilik, and the Copper Eskimos—the three groups classically regarded as comprising the Central Arctic Inuit. In so doing, however, this discussion ranges from the Punuk cultural stage of Eskimo/Inuit cultural evolution to the origins of Caribou Eskimo society and the "big man" phenomenon sometimes hypothesized to have occurred in Labrador. This section's analysis is further informed theoretically by Levi-Strauss and Edmund Leach. Last, there is a very brief chapter (my third section) on how the reassessment of Inuit social organization presented here can inform the political development of Nunavut.

I have outlined some important elements presented by the author. His main thesis, however, concerns the critical importance that the respect-obedience and affection-solidarity principles played in the structural formation of Inuit social groupings. Stevenson is faithful in applying this "measure" to determine inter-group "differentness" within Cumberland Sound and to compare all Central Inuit societies. I am not in total agreement with the author's rigid application of *nalartuk-ungayuk* as the near-foundational element of Inuit social structure or his sweeping views of societies less familiar to him than the Pangnirtarmiut. However, I do applaud that, at a time when far too many students lack even a passing appreciation of the behavioural aspects associated with Inuit kinship, such information is focal to Stevenson's work. Apart from the discussion of behavioural aspects, I find much of the